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SUBJECT: ABYEI UPDATE JUNE 19

¶1. (U) SPLA and SAF contingents that will form the basis of the new JIU battalion in Abyei began to arrive in Abyei June 19, according to UNMIS. 310 SPLA troops arrived overland from Wau June 19, while the 200 SAF arrived overland from Muglad with an additional 100 due to arrive later the same day. UNMIS reported that its movements are still restricted, but that it will press for greater movement now that the new JIU is beginning to deploy. The SAF 31st brigade is supposed to leave Abyei once the new JIU is fully deployed, but has not yet made any moves toward redeployment according to UNMIS. Replacement police contingents have not yet been deployed in Abyei, according to both UNMIS and SPLM contacts.

¶2. (SBU) Vice President Ali Osman Taha will travel to Juba June 20 to discuss the interim administration and the arbitration mechanism (as well as the draft electoral law) according to NCP negotiator and parliamentarian Dirdiery Mohammed Ahmed. Dirdiery said the NCP will not accept Edward Lino, the SPLM's current representative in Abyei who has been viewed by many as a provocateur in the current crisis, as the interim administrator for Abyei under the agreement. For their part, the SPLM will not accept a Misseriya as the deputy administrator, according to SPLM northern sector representative Yasir Arman. SPLM contacts told CG Juba that possible alternatives to Edward Lino include the SPLA's JDB representative Major General Kuol Diem Kuol. However, Minister of the Presidency Luka Biong Deng told CG Juba that he did not believe Edward Lino would be replaced. (Comment: If the NCP is willing to concede that a Misseriya will not have the deputy slot, the SPLM may be willing to remove Lino, though this will be a tough compromise for both sides to accept. End comment.)

¶3. (SBU) In a meeting with CDA Fernandez June 18, SPLM northern sector Deputy SG Yasir Arman was optimistic about the Abyei agreement and thought it likely the NCP would implement it. "The biggest test will be the interim administration," said Arman. Arman suggested that a Dinka NCP member such as Zakaria Atem would be acceptable for the deputy slot. He pointed out that there are many other positions in the interim administration, such as the thirty-person "administrative council" to which local Misseriya could be appointed.

¶4. (SBU) Arman laughingly noted that Atem's entire family is SPLM, with Atem's eldest son serving as one of Foreign Minister Deng Alor's SPLM bodyguards. Atem, with whom CDA Fernandez met in April in Abyei at the NCP's fortress-like headquarters, is an elderly and faithful minion of the NCP with a long and sordid history as informer and agent of Khartoum. But he is also an Ngok Dinka and son of Abyei.

¶5. (SBU) Arman believes that the NCP reached an agreement on Abyei because they were afraid that "something big would happen" if they did not. The aftermath of the Omdurman JEM attack, combination of the UNSC visit and SE Williamson's abrupt departure scared them, he said, and they wanted to demonstrate progress. Arman views wealth sharing as the biggest obstacle in the Abyei agreement. He pointed

out that although the amount of oil produced will decrease over time (this is a common point made by foreign diplomats hoping to encourage the NCP and SPLM not to view Abyei as a major source of future oil revenue) the price of oil is constantly increasing and the amounts of revenue involved are still very large in Sudanese terms, in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Arman said the SPLM surprisingly did not push to address oil arrears in the agreement because it would have blocked progress at a critical time during negotiations. He said the SPLM hopes to address arrears during arbitration discussions. (Note: During the first three years of the CPA, no oil revenues from Abyei have been reallocated because an interim administration was never put in place. End note.)

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Sending fresh troops to Abyei is the easy part; negotiating the interim administration and the arbitration mechanism is the true test of good will on both sides. With an agenda for Juba that includes both Abyei and the elections law, Taha and Kiir have an enormous, short-fused challenge before them and it is unrealistic to expect full resolution on either issue this weekend. What we could see, and would be both telling and worrisome, would be deadlock over the two top officials for the region. Progress on the composition of the interim administration alone would be a good outcome for the discussions in Juba.

FERNANDEZ